

THE FLYLEAF

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FRIENDS OF THE
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AT RICE UNIVERSITY

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FRIENDS OF THE FONDREN LIBRARY

is an association of bibliophiles interested in book collecting, and particularly interested in increasing and making better known the resources of the Fondren Library at Rice University. It shall be the purpose of this organization to secure gifts and bequests and provide funds, whenever possible, for the purchase of rare books, manuscripts, and other material which could not otherwise be acquired by the library.

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the Fondren Library, Rice
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Professor Gilbert M. Cuthbertson, photographed in the R Room, Rice Stadium on the occasion of his talk to the Friends.

A BOOK COLLECTOR'S UNCIVIL WAR

Gilbert M. Cuthbertson

Dr. Gilbert M. Cuthbertson of the Department of Political Sciences is a native of Missouri who has been on the faculty at Rice University since 1963. He received a B.A. degree from the University of Kansas in 1959 and a Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1963.

Professor Cuthbertson, who has received George R. Brown Teaching Awards in 1975, 1976, 1977, and 1978, is a active, dedicated book and manuscript collector in addition to being a teacher and author. His personal library of several thousand volumes contains many interesting and not a few rare and valuable titles in such areas of collecting interest as the Civil War, Texana, Western Americana, political science, and history. These volumes were collected over a number of years in which Professor Cuthbertson made visits to auctions, garage sales and book stores dealing with old, rare, and out-of-print materials.

The Flyleaf is pleased to publish the complete text of Professor Cuthbertson's recent talk to the membership of the Friends of the Fondren Library in which he recounts in a humorous and delightful way some of his experiences as a book collector.

There was a time in Texas when the legislature came close to banning the importation of all books. There was a time when Frederick Law Olmstead remarked on how little reading material he saw before Texans. There was a time, as W. J. Cash put it, when there were more Ciceroes and Catos among the slaves than on the plantation's book shelves.

This afternoon I do not intend to rival Eugene Field's *Love Affairs of a Bibliomaniac* or Texas' John Jenkins' *The Audubon Caper and Others* including a "Texas boy's dealings with the Mafia." I do intend to share a number of experiences regarding books and book-collecting.

It is well-known that my office has been nicknamed "The Library of Congress" and is a sight to behold. Harry Elkins Widener, the great Harvard collector, went down with the *Titanic*, and I know just how he felt. Taking seriously Carlyle's remark that "a collection of books is a real university," I have scouted books over the entire continent and met a few characters in the books and selling the books.

For example, I remember old Inky Dot, who had coon dogs for sale in the Holler. Every time he would sell one, it would, like the proverbial penny, find its way back home. I introduce Inky Dot because he and Topsy had a second-hand store, ornamented with the indoor plumbing used as outdoor flower arrangers. Topsy sold books by size. The little ones were 10 cents; the big ones, 25. I have also purchased books by the pound, the box, the armload, in fact by any measurement except the metric ton.

I remember Rosy who still drove to town in a buckboard—it is a little embarrassing to remember the days in which the iceman came behind a floored mule. No Indians had camped at the Springs for thirty years. There were no recent reports of gypsies or the James boys. Rosy wore only glass frames without lenses, like some Southern shack with the TV antenna but no TV. The books were in the shed with a mint condition Model T. It was not quite so difficult then to discover mint condition model T's. I asked her reasonably enough what she would take for both of them. As a matter of fact I had just cleaned out a Kansas barn to secure my first edition of *The Red Badge of Courage*. Rosy explained that they were Pappy's books and she would sell as soon as he was ready. After a few more frustrating visits I learned that Pappy had passed on some twenty years before.

I have never bought books from a ghost but have listened to a number of ghost stories including the tale of Miss Wheeler about the ill-fated lover who mysteriously appear in photographs of the post at Fort Gibson, Oklahoma and the cavalryman who was killed by Indians on his wedding day. I remember another time when I walked into a house and spotted a portrait on the wall. I told the woman that it looked like Tallulah Bankhead. That was another memory. She said: "Young man, my first husband said I looked like Tallulah, that's why I married him." I left with a book or two. At another sale a woman told me she couldn't find her "beaded Texas." Now I didn't know what a "beaded Texas" was but found out that it was a beaded University of Texas pennant.

In Houston I remember bolting over the bottom of a closed double Dutch door at the Veterans Administration sale to obtain my copy of Holinshed's *Chronicles of England, Ireland, and Scotland* from which are derived several Shakespearean plots. The nurses mistook me for an out patient. Incidentally, almost any book can be obtained for under a dollar. It simply requires patience. The ones that I was offered for two and a half million were stolen anyway.

Books are where you find them, garage sales, flea markets, and the proverbial attic which Mr. Jenkins describes as the source of all rare books. The Cornhill in Boston was a rather suspect neighborhood. There the books were finally given away for tax purposes. Leary's in Philadelphia closed. There you used to climb the ladders. Lowdermilk's in Washington closed. In Houston Colleen's on Telephone Road is in my judgment the best browsing bookstore, especially for "things." Colleen herself is the nice dealer.

Texas author Larry McMurtry and I used to run footraces at the Houston book sales to see who could get there first. He was faster, but I could get there earlier. Mr. McMurtry, the author of *Hud* and *The Last Picture Show*, used to be on the Rice faculty. He is now partially lost to Texas and is operating a bookstore in Georgetown. I was always rather sorry not to have become better acquainted with him but was afraid that I might end up as a character

one of his novels. As you may know Fondren Library was the scene for a number of episodes.

Fondren has been an excellent place to collect books, well not in the ordinary sense of the phrase, although the duplicate sale is always interesting. I could also like to thank the Friends of Fondren for their support and the recent sale at the DuBose Galleries even if I placed second. Nancy Parker and Walter Buenger have recently discovered an unknown Sam Houston letter in the Hamman papers.

I remember poor Andrew Muir looking forever like Huckleberry Finn trying to save the Confederate imprints and Texana the day after the great flood. I remember the lovable Miss Pender Turnbull with her vast knowledge of Rice and rare books. I also remember the day during finals when the students loosed a greased pig in Fondren. The Pinkertons had to be restrained from shooting the animal. I remember the day when they put the nose in the dumb waiter and the day they streaked or struck.

Books related to Rice have always been a special interest. For example I discovered one of the H&TC's early law suits involving William Marsh Rice and the library of the famed Coach Arbuckle. From the latter I obtained a number of J. Frank Dobie items since Dobie and Arbuckle were at Southwestern, as well as the first program of the Rice A&M football game. Rice in those days competed with teams from Lamar High School and the First National Bank. The Arbuckle Poll to the uninitiated is the one which always predicts at the beginning of the season that Rice will win the Southwest Conference.

At the opening of Sid Richardson College I was able to secure a personally autographed edition from LBJ. Since then I have gotten a number of others not quite so personally autographed that he signed for a bookstore in Johnson City. As an undergraduate at the University of Kansas, Wilt Chamberlain was in my class. I have an autographed copy of John F. Kennedy's *Profiles in Courage*.

Autographs and original manuscripts are a particular interest, but my reluctance to accept various ones as authentic has probably led me to reject a number of valuable ones, a Houston letter, for example. Ira Corn of Dallas has so perfectly reproduced the original printing of the Declaration of Independence that the paper and stains are the same. I believe that it was Professor McKillop who related the story of the French forger, Denis St. Vrain, who successfully perpetrated the love letters of Antony to Cleopatra and the original proceedings against Christ in the Sanhedrin on an unsuspecting and gullible academic world. It is particularly memorable because the love letters were written in French.

I have always liked literary oddities—a book purportedly authored by Henry "Wordsworth" Longfellow, for example. I have bought a Cherokee

Constitution under the guise of being a Greek testament, Ethiopian scroll, Chinese poetry, Mohammedan prayer boards, and Buddhist venetian blind books. The owner of the prayer board also had rifles from the Atlas Mountains with which she told me her father had killed many Christians. F.D. collected miniature books. I got a series of Japanese maps from the collection of the Dutch naturalist Seyboldt who was expelled from Japan early in the 19th century for collecting Japanese maps. While many people go in for first editions, I have at least one "last edition," that signed by an Oklahoma lawyer, Moman Pruiett, on his deathbed. He was a character in Ed Ferber's *Cimarron*. There is also one item which can be identified neither to language or use.

In the books themselves you meet buffalo hunters, outlaws, Texas Confederates, the inventor of Jello. In a Houston garage I met Charles Belling Stewart, the Hancock of Texas. Sometimes the competition is fierce. On one occasion I regrettably got half a book. I am, incidentally, like the woman who was discovered to be allergic to her husband, allergic to books. This is the book collector's uncivil war.



Kay Dobelman, President of the Friends 1977-78, and Walter S. Baker, Jr., member-at-large of the Board of Directors of the Friends of Fondren Library.



Professor Cuthbertson visiting with Mr. Henry Heiser, bookman, who assisted the Friends with the April, 1978 Book Sale at Du Bose Gallery.

FRIENDS BOOK SALE, APRIL, 1978

The Friends of the Fondren Library worked for several months during 1977-78 to organize a two-day Book Sale at the Du Bose Gallery, 2950 Kirby Drive. This beautiful facility was generously made available for this sale by Stanley McDonald, past President of the Friends of Fondren Library.

Emphasis was placed on collecting and selecting fine and exceptional books for this sale. There were dictionaries, books on art, music, gardening, and antiques. There were bibliographies, Americana, Texana, university press and museum publications, encyclopedias, reference books, leather-bound books, and other books that duplicated materials available in the Fondren Library.

With considerable assistance from Stanley McDonald, volunteer Friends (Mr. Henry Heiser, in particular), and Fondren Library staff, several hundred volumes were arranged into appropriate categories, priced, and offered for sale during Friday and Saturday, April 7th and 8th.

I am pleased to report that the Friends realized a profit of \$3,070 for this Book Sale and that this amount immediately was made available to the Fondren for the purchase of library materials to support teaching and research. Many thanks to the volunteers who did so much before and during the Book Sale.

It is likely that the Friends will require very little encouragement to sponsor another Book Sale in the spring of 1979. I urge the Friends and their friends to begin to put aside high quality books of the types listed above; we will call for them later. With your cooperation, the Friends of Fondren Library, Rice University will soon have the reputation of sponsoring annually one of the best book sales in Houston.

Richard L. O'Keeffe
University Librarian

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Many Friends, faculty, authors and organizations made donations of books, journals and manuscripts. These publications are too numerous to mention individually; however, it is with gratitude that the Fondren Library acknowledges receiving gifts from:

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GIFTS IN KIND

In loving memory of CLARK F. BIESEMEIER, Sharon Heuer made a gift of *ERGEBNISSE DER AERODYNAMISCHEN VERSUCHSANSTALT ZU GÖTTINGEN, I and II* by Lieferung and *VORTRÄGE UND ABHANDLUNGEN AUS DEM GEBIETE DES FLUGZEUGBAUES UND LUFTSCHIFFBAUES, 1914 - 1930* by von C. Dornier.

Professor André Bourgeois presented *ALBUM STENDAHL* with an inscription in memory of DR. MARCEL MORAUD, Professor emeritus of French.

In memory of DR. MARCEL MORAUD, Mr. & Mrs. H. Malcolm Lovett have made funds available to make it possible to add copies of the late Professor Moraud's more important publications to the library's collections.

Mary and Frank Shelton have donated to the Fondren Collection *THE WORKS OF SHAKESPEARE, Imperial Edition (ca.1875) in four volumes*, edited by Charles Knight, in memory of DR. MARCEL MORAUD.

Porcher's *L'ENLUMINURE FRANÇAISE* was presented in memory of DR. MARCEL MORAUD by Louis Vorms, Consul General, Consulat Général de France à Houston.

In memory of MRS. WRIGHT MORROW, Rita Cobler donated to the Library *ROOTS OF ART* by Andreas Feininger.

Through the generosity of the Classmates of Patsy Lawnhurst, the Music Library has purchased a number of *Jazz records and tapes* in memory of JOHN STEPHEN SENSAT.

Ms. Laura Lewis has also made possible the purchase of *Jazz records and tapes* for the Music Library in JOHN STEPHEN SENSAT's memory.

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In honor of

MR. & MRS. J. MILES ABELL,
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Mr. & Mrs. Raymond H. Moers

**Deceased on March 10, 1978.*

SPECIAL GIFT

In April, 1978 a special gift of significant interest to the historian was acquired by the Woodson Research Center of the Fondren Library: a *collection of the private papers of Walter and Estelle Sharp*.

Walter Benona Sharp helped usher in the oil boom in Texas, while his wife Estelle Boughton Sharp used her wealth and talents throughout her long life for a variety of social and charitable projects. A record of their lives, their times, and the people who surrounded them may be found in the Sharp Collection. Although of only moderate size--six linear feet of shelf space, a four inch deep oversized drawer, and twelve and one-half hours of oral interviews--this collection holds much of value for those interested in the Southwest.

Walter Sharp began his career before 1890 in the graveling, paving, and grading of city streets. He then turned to the more successful enterprise of water well drilling for a number of communities as well as companies in Southwest Texas, Arkansas and Mississippi. Many of his business papers pertain to this topic.

In 1893 he made the transition from water well drilling to oil, drilling near what was to become the famous Spindletop Field. Sharp was not able to get deep enough at Spindletop, but did achieve some success in oil fields near Corsicana. Later, after the Spindletop gusher in 1901, Sharp along with Judge James L. Autry, J. S. Cullinan, Will Hogg and others played a prominent role in the foundation of the Texas Company (now TEXACO). About the same time, in partnership with Howard Hughes, Sr., he founded Sharp-Hughes Tool Company. Most of his business documents concern these oil-related topics. Prominent places described are Houston, Beaumont, Dallas and Corsicana.

Business was not Sharp's entire life, however, and about one half of the Walter Benona Sharp papers consist of his correspondence with his family, other personal papers, and tributes, memorials, and expressions of sympathy at the time of his death.

The papers of his wife, Estelle Boughton Sharp, cover a more extensive variety of topics dating from 1888 to 1965 and involve the cities of Chicago, New York, Houston and Fort Davis, where the Sharp family owned a summer house. Mrs. Sharp was one of Houston's most active supporters of the arts and civic enterprises. After Sharp's death in 1912, she kept a hand in business, but increasingly turned her interests to social services, clubwork, and the international peace movement.



**Estelle Boughton Sharp and her
Walter Bedford Sharp (left) and
Sharp (right).**

**Walter Benona Sharp and Estelle Boughton
Sharp visiting the Garden of the Gods.**



Mrs. Sharp helped establish the United Charities, which became the United Fund in Houston, and was also involved with the League of Nations and the 1936 Texas Centennial Commission.

In the 1930's, 40's and 50's she expressed her family's interest in oil by funding several projects chronicling the history of the petroleum industry in the Southwest. Among these was the highly regarded *Oral History of the Texas Oil Pioneers*, a project of the University of Texas at Austin.

Her papers include such files as business and estate papers, personal correspondence, philanthropy and social welfare materials, international correspondence and League of Nations information, and some genealogical and D.A.R. records concerning the Boughton-Frost-Sharp families. There is also a file concerning Rice University and the Sharp lectureship, and an extensive collection of newspaper clippings and family photographs.

A third facet of the Sharp Collection is a series of oral interviews which lend a multi-dimensional perspective to the Sharp family, early Houston, and the history of oil in Texas. Funds for such enrichment have been provided by Mr. Dudley C. Sharp, Sr., son of Walter and Estelle Sharp and donor of the manuscripts to the Research Center. The interviews, recently conducted by graduate student Walter Buenger of the Rice University History Department, include talks with Miss Eva Davis, first principal of River Oaks Elementary School and long-time friend of Mrs. Sharp, and with Miss Nina Cullinan, daughter of J. S. Cullinan, concerning her reflections on the Sharps and other Texas oil families. A third interview was conducted with Mrs. Arthur Boice on her acquaintance with Mrs. Sharp and the development of Houston since 1918. Also, two interviews were recorded with Dudley C. Sharp, Sr., one of which included a discussion of his mother and early childhood. At the second, his wife Tina Cleveland Sharp was present and discussion included information on Sharp's early education, politics, and the Cleveland family.

Additionally, the Collection includes a taped interview of Estelle Sharp by William A. Owens, author of *FEVER IN THE EARTH*, a novel whose main character was patterned after Walter B. Sharp. The recording, which was originally reel-to-reel, has recently been transferred to cassette tapes for easy use by interested researchers. The Research Center also has in its possession an autographed copy of the novel by Owens with an inscription by him for Mrs. Sharp.

The Woodson Research Center presently houses several collections concerning early Texas entrepreneurs which relate to the Sharp Manuscripts. One such collection is that of the Papers of Judge James L. Autry whose association with the Sharps involved both the business enterprise of the Texas Company and after Walter Sharp's death, the handling of legal affairs on

Mrs. Sharp's behalf. The Will Clayton Papers are a second of these collections and they include correspondence with Mrs. Sharp concerning a mutual interest in the world peace movement. Other entrepreneurial collections are the papers of Judge Harris Masterson, General William H. Hamman, William Allen Haynes, and John Campbell.

Much has been written on the turbulent birth of the oil industry in the Southwest--and Walter Sharp's life certainly had its share of drama--yet, perhaps even more important was the ongoing role of the entrepreneurial families which came out of these early years. Within the bounds of the Sharp Collection is an indepth look at one of these families.

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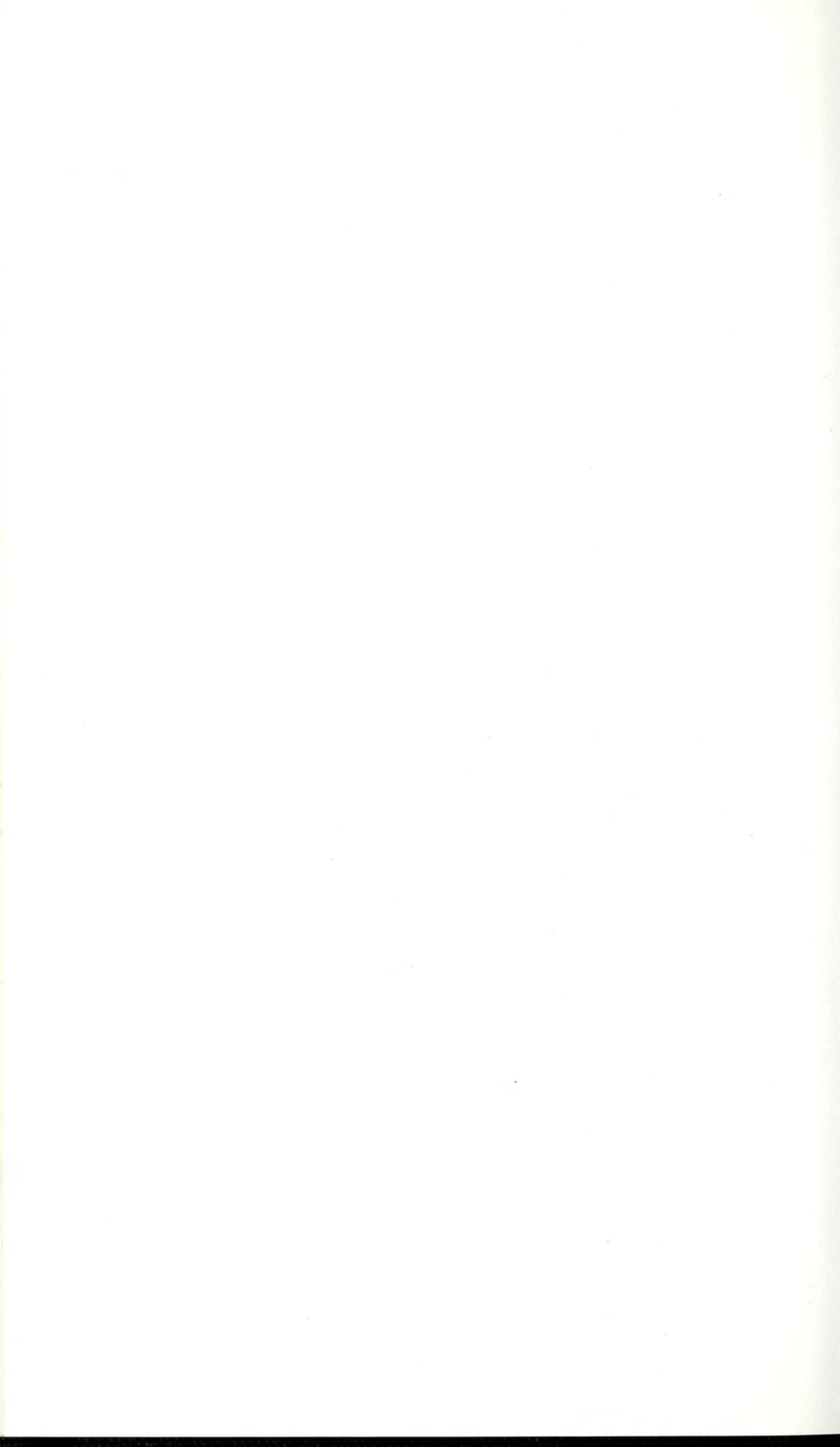
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